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ABSTRACT

The highly successful Project Success Environment, a three-year project in Atlanta, Georgia, was directed toward the problem of academic underachievement in inner-city schools. The main thrust of the program was the construction of a positive learning environment--a restructuring of the classroom that replaces the failure environment with a success environment that, in turn, promotes future successful experiences. Out of this approach a classroom management system, success technique, evolved which consisted of three components: positive contingency management system (behavior modification) designed to deliver high reinforcement of appropriate social and academic behavior, classroom arrangement designed to foster small group and individualized teaching, and some revision of the standard curriculum. Various reinforcers were used. First year evaluation results indicated a usable behavior management system had been provided but not an effective program for accelerating academic performance. Thus, reinforcement for academic behavior was emphasized more and begun earlier; project pupils achieved at least one month's gain in reading and arithmetic for each month of project participation. The project has been recognized as one of the top three exemplary programs in the nation during 1973. (EA)

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A T L A N T A P U B L I C S C H O O L S

PROJECT SUCCESS ENVIRONMENT

A D D R E S S

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

INNER-CITY PUPILS--BOTH BLACK AND WHITE--ARE CONSISTENTLY FAILING TO GAIN AN ADEQUATE EDUCATION IN THIS COUNTRY'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS. THE STATISTICAL EVIDENCE IS CLEAR: INNER-CITY CHILDREN ARE TURNED OFF BY SCHOOL. THEY NOT ONLY MEASURE LOWER IN I.Q. AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: THEY ARE CHRONICALLY ABSENT, DISRUPTIVE IN THE CLASSROOM, AND LIKELY TO DROP OUT. AS A GROUP, THEY FALL FURTHER AND FURTHER BEHIND THEIR ECONOMICALLY ADVANTAGED SUBURBAN PEERS WITH EACH YEAR OF SCHOOLING.

FOR ATLANTA, GEORGIA THE PROBLEM OF INNER-CITY EDUCATION IS PARTICULARLY ACUTE. ATLANTA HAS THE LARGEST INNER-CITY POPULATION IN GEORGIA, AND IT HAS SUCCEEDED NO BETTER THAN ANY OTHER LARGE SCHOOL SYSTEM IN EDUCATING THAT POPULATION. IN ATLANTA, FOR EXAMPLE, THE MEDIAN READING SCORE FOR INNER-CITY EIGHTH GRADERS IS SLIGHTLY BELOW THE FIFTH GRADE LEVEL. FOR SOME TIME, ATLANTA--LIKE MANY OTHER SCHOOL SYSTEMS--ATTEMPTED TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM OF ACADEMIC UNDERACHIEVEMENT IN INNER-CITY SCHOOLS PRIMARILY THROUGH COMPENSATORY PROGRAMS SUCH AS TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE OR OPERATING AFTER-SCHOOL TUTORIALS. LIKE ALL COMPENSATORY PROBLEMS, ATLANTA'S OPERATED ON THE PREMISE THAT THE SCHOOL ITSELF IS ESSENTIALLY ADEQUATE AND EFFECTIVE AND THAT THE STUDENTS WHO ARE FAILING ARE, IN FACT, FAILURES... KIDS WHO SOMEHOW JUST COULDN'T 'GET WITH' THE PROGRAM.

THE RELATIVE INEFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMPENSATORY PROGRAMS--AT LEAST ONE HAD A TURNOVER OF 110% IN ONE YEAR--CAUSED SOME ADMINISTRATORS IN THE ATLANTA SCHOOL SYSTEM TO QUESTION THE CONCEPT ON WHICH THEY WERE BASED. LARGELY, THIS QUESTIONING LED TO THE CREATION OF PROJECT SUCCESS ENVIRONMENT. PROJECT SUCCESS ENVIRONMENT (PSE) STARTS WITH THE ASSUMP-

TION THAT TO HELP THE STUDENTS LEARN THE SCHOOL ITSELF MUST BE CHANGED. THE TYPICAL CLASSROOM IS FAILURE-ORIENTED. ALL TO OFTEN WRONG ANSWERS, SLOPPY WORK, AND DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR ARE WHAT THE TEACHER CONCENTRATES ON, WHILE GOOD BEHAVIOR AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS ARE ASSUMED TO BE THEIR OWN REWARD.

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE DESIGNED TO BUILD SUCCESSIVELY YEAR AFTER YEAR UPON SKILLS ACQUIRED BY CHILDREN IN PREVIOUS YEARS. IF AT ANY POINT THE CHILD HAS NOT ACQUIRED THE APPROPRIATE PREREQUISITE SKILLS, FAILURE IS LIKELY. FOR INNER-CITY CHILDREN SUCH FAILURES OFTEN OCCUR EARLY. THE PROJECT ORIGINATORS HYPOTHESIZED THAT MANY INNER-CITY CHILDREN CONSISTENTLY FAIL BECAUSE THE CLASSROOM IS SET UP SO THEY DON'T EXPERIENCE EARLY SUCCESS; THEREFORE, THEY HAVE NO SUCCESSES TO BUILD ON. THEN, KNOWING ONLY FAILURE, THEY EXPECT TO FAIL...AND THEY DO. BY RESTRUCTURING THE CLASSROOM, REPLACING THE FAILURE ENVIRONMENT WITH A SUCCESS ENVIRONMENT, PROJECT SUCCESS ENVIRONMENT ATTEMPTS TO GIVE THESE STUDENTS SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCES ON WHICH TO BUILD. SPECIFICALLY, THE PROJECT:

1. TRAINS TEACHERS TO BE LESS PUNITIVE AND MORE REWARDING AS THEY INTERACT WITH STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM.
2. CREATES A CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT WHERE STUDENTS WILL EXHIBIT LESS DISRUPTIVE AND MORE ON TASK BEHAVIOR THAN STUDENTS IN REGULAR CLASSROOMS.
3. CREATES A CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT WHICH EMPHASIZES SUCCESS AND MINIMIZES FAILURE BY BUILDING SUCCESS EXPERIENCES FOR EVERY CHILD INTO THE REGULAR CLASSROOM ROUTINE.
4. CREATES A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT WHICH WILL ENABLE PROJECT STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE MORE ACADEMICALLY THAN STUDENTS IN REGULAR CLASSES.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

OVERVIEW

AS THE PSE STAFF BEGAN TO CONSTRUCT THIS POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, A COMPLETE SYSTEM OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT EVOLVED. EVENTUALLY CALLED THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE, THIS SYSTEM HAS THREE COMPONENTS: A POSITIVE CONTINGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM DESIGNED TO DELIVER A HIGH RATE OF REINFORCEMENT (AND THUS SUCCESS) FOR APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC BEHAVIORS, A CLASSROOM ARRANGEMENT DESIGNED TO FOSTER SMALL GROUP AND INDIVIDUALIZED TEACHING, AND SOME REVISION OF THE STANDARD CURRICULUM. IN SEPTEMBER OF 1970, THE PSE STAFF INTRODUCED THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE INTO THREE ATLANTA SCHOOLS, ONE MIDDLE SCHOOL AND TWO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS. AT THIS POINT, THREE SEVENTH-GRADE AND FIVE FIRST-THROUGH-THIRD-GRADE TEACHERS WERE INVOLVED. ALL THE TEACHERS WERE VOLUNTEERS, AND ALL HAD PARTICIPATED IN AN INTENSIVE SUMMER TRAINING COURSE. THOUGH ONLY 200 STUDENTS WERE ENROLLED IN THE PROGRAM DURING THIS FIRST YEAR, THE TOTAL PROJECT EFFORT GREW TO INVOLVE APPROXIMATELY 1,300 PUPILS IN GRADES 1-7 AT THE END OF THE THREE-YEAR FUNDING PERIOD. (THIS FIGURE IS NOW WELL OVER 2,300 - BUT THE INTENT HERE IS TO DESCRIBE THE DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION OF THE TECHNIQUE.)

COMPONENTS

REINFORCEMENT SYSTEM. TEACHER ATTITUDE IS CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OF ANY PROJECT, SO THE PROJECT BEGINS THERE. IN A WORKSHOP HELD BEFORE SCHOOL OPENS THE STAFF TRAINS PSE TEACHERS IN THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE REINFORCEMENT SYSTEM. ALL SUCCESS TEACHERS PROVIDE POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT--A TANGIBLE REWARD (SUCH AS CHECKMARKS OR TICKETS) COUPLED WITH VERBAL PRAISE--WHENEVER STUDENTS EXHIBIT DESIRED BEHAVIOR. FILLED CHECKMARK CARDS AND ACCUMULATED TICKETS MAY THEN BE EXCHANGED FOR SPECIFIC REWARDS DURING "TRADING TIME", A PERIOD DURING THE DAY SET ASIDE ESPECIALLY FOR THIS PURPOSE.

THOUGH THE SYSTEM SOUND SIMPLE, REINFORCEMENT IS ONLY EFFECTIVE WHEN ADMINISTERED CONSISTENTLY, IN SPECIFIC WAYS. IN THE PRE-SCHOOL WORKSHOPS, ALL PSE TEACHERS LEARN TO OBSERVE THREE BASIC RULES. FIRST, REINFORCEMENT MUST BE IMMEDIATE. SECOND, REINFORCEMENT MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY DESCRIPTIVE PRAISE, WHICH NAMES THE PRECISE BEHAVIOR BEING REWARDED AND WHICH EMPHASIZES THAT THE STUDENT HIMSELF--HIS EFFORTS ARE THE CAUSE OF THE REWARD. THE TEACHER MIGHT SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, "THANK YOU FOR RAISING YOUR HAND, JAMES. YOU HAVE EARNED A TICKET." FINALLY, ONLY DESIRABLE BEHAVIOR RECEIVES ATTENTION. THIS FINAL RULE IS CRUCIAL TO THE EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF A SUCCESS CLASSROOM: OLD HABITS OF DISRUPTING THE CLASS TO GAIN THE TEACHER'S ATTENTION CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO SUCCEED. TO INSURE THAT THEY DON'T, ALL SUCCESS TEACHERS ARE TRAINED TO USE THE TECHNIQUE OF "IGNORE AND PRAISE" AS THE PRIMARY FORM OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT. WHEN A STUDENT IS DISRUPTIVE OR INATTENTIVE, THE TEACHER DOES NOT DEAL DIRECTLY WITH THAT BEHAVIOR. APPEARING TO IGNORE THE DISRUPTIVE STUDENT, SHE SINGLES OUT A NEARBY STUDENT BEHAVING IN THE OPPOSITE WAY AND REWARDS <u>HIM</u>, THUS CUING THE DESIRED BEHAVIOR FOR THE PROBLEM STUDENT. WHEN THE MISBEHAVING STUDENTS TAKES THE HINT AND IMITATES THE DESIRED BEHAVIOR, THE TEACHER REWARDS HIM IMMEDIATELY. UNLESS THE STUDENT IS EITHER SO DISRUPTIVE THAT THE TEACHER CAN FIND NOTHING POSITIVE TO REWARD OR IS DANGEROUS TO OTHER STUDENTS, THE PROJECT SUCCESS TEACHER RESOLUTELY REFUSES TO ACKNOWLEDGE HIS DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR.

<u>CLASSROOM DESIGN</u>. THE PSE CLASSROOM IS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED BOTH TO CREATE A FRAMEWORK FOR POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT AND TO MAKE THE REINFORCEMENT TECHNIQUE PRACTICABLE. BEFORE SCHOOL OPENS, EACH SUCCESS TEACHER HAS USED SPECIFIC GUIDELINES TO FORMULATE A SET OF RULES FOR CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR. THESE RULES MUST BE BRIEF AND SPECIFIC, BE STATED POSITIVELY, AND BE NO LESS THAN THREE AND NO MORE THAN FIVE IN NUMBER.

AS THE CHILDREN ENTER ON THE FIRST DAY, THEY SEE THESE RULES PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED ON THE WALLS. THEN THE TEACHER EXPLAINS HOW SHE INTERPRETS THEM. FROM THEN ON, EACH CHILD IS CONSTANTLY REMINDED--JUST BY LOOKING AT THE WALLS--OF THE THINGS HE CAN--AND MUST--DO TO EARN REWARDS. TOO, THESE SAME POSTERS SERVE AS A CUE TO THE TEACHER. A LARGE POSTER PICTURING AVAILABLE REWARDS AND THEIR TOKEN PRICES PROVIDES ADDITIONAL IMPETUS TO SUCCEED.

THOUGH MOST PSE CLASSES ARE CONDUCTED IN STANDARD CLASSROOMS, THEY ARE ORGANIZED FOR A SUCCESS ENVIRONMENT. THE TEACHER CAN ONLY PROVIDE IMMEDIATE POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT IF SHE IS WORKING WITH GROUPS SMALL ENOUGH TO PERMIT EASY RECOGNITION OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS. THE CLASSROOM DESIGN MAKES CONSISTENT GROUPING FEASIBLE. TYPICALLY, A PSE CLASS IS DIVIDED INTO THREE FLEXIBLE GROUPS. THE DESKS ARE ARRANGED IN A U-SHAPE, WITH EACH GROUP HAVING ITS OWN CLEARLY DEFINED AREA. THIS IS THE MASTERY CENTER, WHERE CHILDREN DO SEATWORK AND RECEIVE DIRECT INSTRUCTION FROM THE TEACHER. AT INTERVALS AROUND THE ROOM ARE INTEREST STATIONS. THE TYPE AND THE NUMBER OF INTEREST STATIONS VARY FROM CLASSROOM TO CLASSROOM; HOWEVER, TYPICAL STATIONS MIGHT BE ART, GAMES AND PUZZLES, LIBRARY, COMMUNICATION, AND EXPLORATORY (SCIENCE). ALL MATERIAL IN EACH STATION IS DESIGNED TO FOSTER SPECIFIC SKILLS, HAVE A HIGH INTEREST LEVEL, AND REQUIRE LITTLE TEACHER SUPERVISION. THE MATERIALS AT THE STATIONS ARE CHANGED OR ROTATED AMONG THE CLASSROOMS AT LEAST WEEKLY. IN MOST CASES, THE CLASS TIME IS DIVIDED INTO 30 MINUTE BLOCKS. WITHIN A 90 MINUTE TIME BLOCK EACH GROUP SPENDS 30 MINUTES WORKING WITH THE TEACHER, 30 MINUTES DOING SEATWORK, AND 30 MINUTES AT VARIOUS ASSIGNED INTEREST STATIONS.

CURRICULUM. LIKE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM ARRANGEMENTS, TRADITIONAL CURRICULUM--READING, RECITATION, DRILL, HOMEWORK, AND WEEKLY TESTS--DOESN'T ADAPT TO IMMEDIATE REINFORCEMENT. WHEN THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE

IS APPLIED TO ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, BASIC CURRICULUM MUST BE MODIFIED TO MEET THREE CRITERIA: EACH CHILD MUST EXPERIENCE SUCCESS: EACH CHILD MUST RECEIVE WORK HE CAN SUCCESSFULLY DO: AND EACH CHILD'S WORK MUST BE EVALUATED FREQUENTLY AND REINFORCED IMMEDIATELY. (THIS APPLIES PRIMARILY TO THE FIRST TWO-FOUR WEEKS OF SCHOOL.) THE STANDARD CURRICULUM EMPLOYED IN THE ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS WAS, THEREFORE, MODIFIED SLIGHTLY FOR USE WITH THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE.

FIRST, WITHIN EACH CLASS THE STUDENTS WERE GROUPED ACCORDING TO READING ABILITY, AND CURRICULUM MATERIALS WERE SELECTED AT LEVELS APPROPRIATE TO THE THREE GROUPS. TWO TYPES OF DIAGNOSTIC READING TESTS WERE USED IN PROJECT CLASSES. IN GRADES ONE, TWO, AND THREE THE COMPREHENSIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM (CIP) READING TEST, A LOCALLY DEVELOPED INSTRUMENT, WAS ADMINISTERED EVERY SIX WEEKS. THE CIP TESTS GAVE THE TEACHER PERIODIC INFORMAL EVALUATION OF PUPIL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ON TWENTY-FOUR BASIC READING SKILLS. THE RESULTS OF THE TESTS WERE PLACED ON A CLASS READING SHEET. THIS ENABLED THE TEACHER TO PINPOINT THE WEAKNESSES OF EACH PUPIL AND TO GEAR HER INSTRUCTION TOWARD FILLING THE GAPS OF SPECIFIC PUPILS.

IN GRADES FOUR, FIVE, AND SIX THE STANDFORD DIAGNOSTIC READING TESTS WERE ADMINISTERED TWICE A YEAR. THE RESULTS OF THESE TEST WERE PLACED ON CLASS RECORD SHEETS WHICH COVERED BASIC READING SKILLS. THE TWO PROJECT COORDINATORS AND THE TWO LEAD TEACHERS USED THE RESULTS OBTAINED FROM THE DIAGNOSTIC TESTS TO PREPARE PRESCRIPTION SHEETS WHICH DIAGNOSED THE RESULTS OF THE TESTS AND GAVE SUGGESTIONS FOR PROCEDURES AND MATERIALS TO BE USED. THEY HELPED THE 20 PROJECT TEACHERS BECOME MORE AWARE OF WHAT SKILLS TO STRENGTHEN AND WHICH PUPILS TO HELP WITH SPECIFIC SKILLS.

SECOND, AN ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO SUBDIVIDE THE CURRICULUM IN EACH CONTENT AREA TO CREATE UNITS OF WORK THAT COULD BE COMPLETED, EVALUATED,

AND REINFORCED DAILY. FOR EXAMPLE, CHILDREN WERE GIVEN TEACHER-DESIGNED SKILL SHEETS PROVIDING DAILY PRACTICE IN EACH SUBJECT AREA. THESE SHEETS PERMITTED IMMEDIATE EVALUATION, FEEDBACK, AND REINFORCEMENT. IN ADDITION TO THE MODIFIED STANDARD CURRICULUM, THE SULLIVAN READING PROGRAM WAS ADDED AT EVERY GRADE LEVEL. THIS PROGRAM PROVIDED BOTH MATERIALS AT SEVERAL LEVELS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FREQUENT EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK.

THE CHILDREN IN PROJECT CLASSES OFTEN STARTED THE SCHOOL DAY WITH A SHORT TASK REQUIRING ONLY THAT THEY FOLLOW DIRECTIONS. COMMERCIALLY AVAILABLE PERCEPTUAL-MOTOR SHEETS WERE USED ALONG WITH SIMPLE TRACING, DESIGN COPYING, AND VISUAL DISCRIMINATION TASKS. THESE ORDER TASKS WERE DESIGNED TO GET THE STUDENTS INVOLVED EARLY IN THE DAY WITH A SIMPLE TASK ALMOST CERTAIN TO BE COMPLETED SUCCESSFULLY.

DAY-TO-DAY OPERATION

ON THE FIRST DAY THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE IS INTRODUCED INTO THE CLASS, THE TEACHER EMPHASIZES CONDUCT, AND SHE CONTINUES TO REWARD STUDENTS PRIMARILY FOR FOLLOWING THE CLASSROOM CONDUCT RULES FOR APPROXIMATELY A MONTH. PSE STUDENTS GENERALLY SPEND A LOT MORE TIME WORKING AND A LOT LESS TIME DISRUPTING THE CLASS THAN STUDENTS IN REGULAR CLASSES. FOUR TO SIX WEEKS EMPHASIS ON CLASS RULES GENERALLY PRODUCES THIS DIFFERENCE IN CONDUCT BEHAVIOR. IF YOU DESIRE DATA ON THIS PLEASE LET US KNOW - WE HAVE IT.

TOWARD THE END OF THE FIRST MONTH, TOO, SEVERAL OTHER THINGS HAPPEN WITHIN THE REINFORCEMENT SYSTEM. FIRST, THE TEACHER REDUCES THE NUMBER OF REWARDS SHE GIVES OUT DAILY. TO GET EACH CHILD INVOLVED IN THE SYSTEM, SHE INITIALLY TRIES TO INSURE THAT EVERYONE ACCUMULATES ENOUGH TOKENS TO TRADE IN EVERY DAY. AS THE SYSTEM CATCHES ON, HOWEVER, FEWER REWARDS BECOME NECESSARY. SECOND, THE FIRST MONTH PROVIDES TIME TO

GRADUALLY EMPHASIZE ONE KIND OF REWARD MORE THAN ANOTHER. THE PROJECT MAKES TOY WATCHES, TOY JEWELRY, COMIC BOOKS, AND MODEL CARS AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS AT FIRST BECAUSE THESE ALL ARE ITEMS THE STUDENTS IMMEDIATELY RELATE TO AND FIND DESIRABLE. AS TIME PASSES, HOWEVER, ACTIVITIES BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT, AND TANGIBLE REWARDS ARE PHASED OUT.

IN EVERY CLASSROOM CHILDREN VIE WITH EACH OTHER TO PERFORM CERTAIN SPECIAL DUTIES SUCH AS WATERING THE PLANTS, ERASING THE BOARDS, MAKING THE DAILY ATTENDANCE REPORT, OR RUNNING ERRANDS TO THE OFFICE. IN MOST CLASSES, THESE PRIVILEGES ARE CONFERRED BY THE TEACHER'S WHIM. IN PSE CLASSES, HOWEVER, THEY ARE REWARDS WHICH CAN BE EARNED WITH TOKENS. FURTHER, THE PROJECT HAS CREATED SOME ACTIVITY REINFORCERS OF ITS OWN. A STUDENT MAY EARN THE REPONSIBILITY OF BEING A MINI-TEACHER, WHO CHECKS OTHER STUDENTS' WORK AND DISPENSES TOKENS, OR THE PRIVILEGE OF LEADING THE LINE TO LUNCH, KEEPING THE OTHER CHILDREN IN ORDER. ALL PROJECT-CREATED ACTIVITIES ALLOW THE STUDENTS TO FUNCTION AS A SUCCESSFUL ADULT, THUS TO DEVELOP A FEELING OF COMPETENCE AND SELF-WORTH. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO OVER-EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF PUPILS MODELING ON WARM, POSITIVE ADULTS.

THE ONLY PROBLEM WITH THE ACTIVITY REINFORCERS IS THAT NO ONE CLASS HAS ENOUGH TO GO AROUND, SO SHORTLY AFTER THE TECHNIQUE IS INTRODUCED, THE PROJECT MAKES AN ACTIVITY ROOM AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS. THE ACTIVITY ROOM IS STOCKED WITH A VARIETY OF GAMES AND TOYS--FOOSEBALL, LINCOLN LOGS, CAROMS, PRO-SOCCER--CHOSEN ESPECIALLY FOR THEIR APPEAL TO STUDENTS, WHO CAN TRADE THEIR TOKENS FOR 30 MINUTES OF FREE TIME THERE. ONCE THIS ROOM IS AVAILABLE, IT BECOMES THE BASIC REINFORCER WHICH BACKS UP THE TOKEN REINFORCEMENT SYSTEM. BY THE END OF THE CONDUCT PHASE, THE REWARD SYSTEM DEPENDS ALMOST ENTIRELY ON ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL PRIVILEGES.

FROM REINFORCING CONDUCT, THE TEACHER MOVES TO REINFORCING ACADEMIC BEHAVIOR. HERE TOO SHE EMPHASIZES SUCCESS, NOT FAILURE. ANSWERS ARE MARKED "CORRECT", NOT "WRONG". AND IF A STUDENT HAS DIFFICULTY WITH WORK, THE TEACHER DOESN'T FUSS AT HIM ABOUT NOT LISTENING TO DIRECTIONS OR NOT BEING PREPARED. SHE STOPS, ENCOURAGES HIM, POINTS THE WAY TO SUCCESS, AND PROMISES TO RETURN. WHEN DEALING WITH BOTH ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOR, THE IDEA IS TO MAXIMIZE ACHIEVEMENT AND IGNORE FAILURE. THE TEACHER MAY BEGIN BY REWARDING STUDENTS FOR BEGINNING WORK. THEN SHE MAY REWARD COMPLETION. FINALLY, SHE MAY REWARD MASTERY. OUR DATA SHOW IF CONDUCT HAS STABILIZED AND EACH CHILD IS RECEIVING WORK HE CAN DO WHICH IS BEING EVALUATED FREQUENTLY AND REINFORCED IMMEDIATELY SO THAT HE IS ABLE TO EXPERIENCE SUCCESS, THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE WILL ALMOST SURELY LEAD TO INCREASED ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.

STAFF

THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT DURING ITS THIRD YEAR OF OPERATION WAS ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH THE SERVICES OF THE PROJECT'S DIRECTOR, TWO COORDINATORS, TWO LEAD TEACHERS, AN EVALUATOR, A RESEARCH ASSISTANT, A BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT TECHNICIAN, AND A TECHNICAL WRITER.

THE PROJECT DIRECTOR OVERSAW AND FACILITATED THE ONGOING WORK OF THE PROJECT IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS, GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND PROJECT CONSULTANTS FROM EMORY UNIVERSITY. THE TWO COORDINATORS WORKED DIRECTLY WITH THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE ONGOING SUPERVISION OF THE PROJECT TEACHERS AND IN OBTAINING NECESSARY MATERIALS FOR PROJECT CLASSROOMS. THE TWO LEAD TEACHERS AND THE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT TECHNICIAN WORKED DIRECTLY WITH EACH OF THE PROJECT TEACHERS TO IMPROVE THEIR USE OF THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE. THE PROJECT EVALUATOR AND THE RESEARCH ASSISTANT, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PROJECT CONSULTANTS, WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR

THE EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN AND EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM, INCLUDING THE MONITORING OF IN-CLASS OBSERVATIONAL DATA COLLECTION. THE TECHNICAL WRITER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EDITING PROJECT PUBLICATIONS AND FOR PRODUCING SOME PUBLICATIONS FOR DISSEMINATION.

EVALUATION

DURING THE THREE YEARS OF THE PROJECT OPERATION, THE EFFECT OF THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE ON BOTH PUPILS AND TEACHERS WAS EVALUATED CONTINUALLY BY TWO MEMBERS OF THE PROJECT STAFF, AN EVALUATOR AND A BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT TECHNICIAN, WHO SUPERVISED PARAPROFESSIONAL DATA COLLECTION. THESE TWO PSYCHOLOGISTS WORKED CLOSELY WITH A CONSULTING PYSCHOLOGIST FROM EMORY UNIVERSITY IN DEVELOPING THE EVALUATION STRATEGY AND WITH THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT DIVISION OF THE ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN EVALUATING THE DATA. THREE TYPES OF DATA WERE COLLECTED: MEASURES OF PUPIL AND TEACHER BEHAVIOR USING A LOCALLY DEVELOPED IN-CLASS OBSERVATION PROCEDURE CARRIED OUT BY TRAINED PARAPROFESSIONALS; PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS ON ACADEMIC APTITUDE AND ACHIEVEMENT TESTS; AND PUPIL PERFORMANCE ON SEVERAL PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS. A PRE/POST, EXPERIMENTAL/CONTROL DESIGN WAS USED TO EVALUATE THE DATA.

DURING THE FIRST YEAR THE EIGHT PROJECT CLASSES WERE COMPARED BOTH TO EIGHT COMPARISON CLASSES WITHIN THE SAME SCHOOLS AND EIGHT CLASSES IN DIFFERENT SCHOOLS IN THE SAME GENERAL AREA OF THE CITY. COMPARISON CLASSES WERE ESSENTIALLY THE SAME SIZE AS PROJECT CLASSES, AND THEIR TEACHERS HAD APPROXIMATELY THE SAME EDUCATION AND THE SAME EXPERIENCE AS PROJECT TEACHERS. IN YEAR I, THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE HAD A MAJOR IMPACT ON IN-CLASS BEHAVIOR OF PROJECT PUPILS; IT EFFECTIVELY INCREASED ATTENTION TO ASSIGNED ACADEMIC MATERIAL AND REDUCED DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR. FROM SEPTEMBER TO APRIL, THE PROJECT PUPILS EXHIBITED A DRAMATIC RISE IN ON-TASK BEHAVIOR, WHILE THE COMPARISON PUPILS DECLINED; BY APRIL,

THE ATTENTION LEVEL OF THE PROJECT PUPILS WAS MORE THAN 90% AND THAT OF THE COMPARISON PUPILS WAS LESS THAN 77%. IN ADDITION, PROJECT PUPILS WERE LESS THAN ONE-HALF AS DISRUPTIVE AS COMPARISON PUPILS AT EVERY COMPARISON POINT. FURTHERMORE, PROJECT TEACHERS PUNISHED LESS (APPROXIMATELY ONE-HALF AS MANY PUNISHMENTS AS COMPARISON TEACHERS), SPENT MORE TIME IN INDIVIDUAL AND SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION (80% AS OPPOSED TO LESS THAN 50%), AND, BY APRIL, GENERALLY DELIVERED MORE REWARDS PER PUNISHMENT THAN THE CONTROL TEACHERS, (8-10 REWARDS PER PUNISHMENT FOR PROJECT TEACHERS; 2-3 REWARDS PER PUNISHMENT FOR COMPARISON TEACHERS).

DURING YEAR I, THE EFFECT OF THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND ON THE PROJECT STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THEMSELVES AND SCHOOL WERE INCONCLUSIVE. THERE WAS EVIDENCE OF INCREASED ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AT THE THIRD GRADE LEVEL, BUT AT ALL OTHER LEVELS PROJECT AND COMPARISON STUDENTS PERFORMED ABOUT EQUALLY. FURTHER, THE PROJECT PUPILS GAINED VERY LITTLE, IF ANY, IN SELF-ESTEEM; ONLY THE THIRD GRADE GAINED MORE THAN BOTH COMPARISON GROUPS, AND EVEN HERE, THE GAIN WAS QUITE MODEST. THE PROJECT DID NOT SEEM TO AFFECT PUPILS' ATTITUDE TOWARD SCHOOL NOR DID THE PROJECT PUPILS BECOME MORE WILLING TO ACCEPT THE BLAME FOR ACADEMIC FAILURE.

BECAUSE YEAR I RESULTS INDICATED THAT THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE PROVIDED TEACHERS WITH A USUABLE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM BUT NOT AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM FOR ACCELERATING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, REINFORCEMENT FOR ACADEMIC BEHAVIOR WAS BEGUN EARLIER IN YEAR II AND RECEIVED STRONGER EMPHASIS. YEAR III WAS ESSENTIALLY A REPETITION OF YEAR II, AND THE RESULTS FOR YEARS II AND III WERE ESSENTIALLY THE SAME.

DURING THE SECOND YEAR OF THE PROJECT, THE EXPERIMENTAL BASE WAS EXPANDED TO 16 CLASSES, WHILE THERE WERE 14 COMPARISON CLASSES.

DURING YEAR III, THE PROJECT WAS EXPANDED TO INVOLVE APPROXIMATELY 1,300 STUDENTS, THOUGH THE RESEARCH BASE WAS ONLY EXPANDED TO 20 CLASSES, WITH 500 PUPILS ATTENDING PROJECT CLASSROOMS AND 246 RANDOMLY SELECTED PUPILS SERVING AS CONTROLS.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE ON CLASSROOM CONDUCT BEHAVIOR WAS MAINTAINED THROUGHOUT BOTH THE SECOND AND THIRD YEARS. PROJECT PUPILS WERE FIFTY PER CENT LESS DISRUPTIVE THAN COMPARISON PUPILS AND THEIR AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF TIME INVOLVED IN ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES REACHED ABOUT 88 PER CENT RELATIVE TO 55-65 PER CENT INVOLVEMENT FOR CONTROLS. IN BOTH YEARS, TOO, PROJECT TEACHERS REINFORCED WITH MUCH HIGHER FREQUENCY AND PUNISHED WITH LOWER FREQUENCY RELATIVE TO COMPARISON TEACHERS.

DURING BOTH YEARS, PROJECT SUCCESS ENVIRONMENT WAS SUCCESSFUL IN PROMOTING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT. PROJECT PUPILS, IN GENERAL, GAINED SIGNIFICANTLY MORE IN BOTH READING AND ARITHMETIC THAN A COMPARABLE GROUP OF CONTROL PUPILS GAINED OVER THE SAME PERIOD OF TIME. IN ADDITION, PROJECT PUPILS WERE ALSO SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING AT LEAST ONE MONTH'S GAIN IN BOTH READING AND ARITHMETIC FOR EACH MONTH THAT THEY PARTICIPATED IN THE PROJECT. DURING YEAR II OF THE PROJECT'S OPERATION PROJECT PUPILS GAINED AN AVERAGE OF 6.9 MONTHS ON THE CALIFORNIA ACHIEVEMENT TEST (CAT) IN READING COMPARED TO THE 3.4 MONTHS GAINED BY CONTROLS. DURING YEAR III PROJECT PUPILS GAINED 7.0 MONTHS IN READING COMPARED TO THE 4.6 MONTHS GAINED BY CONTROLS. ARITHMETIC GAINS MADE ON THE CAT DURING YEAR III ALSO SUBSTANTIATE THE FINDINGS OF YEAR II. IN ARITHMETIC PROJECT PUPILS GAINED 6.5 MONTHS DURING YEAR II COMPARED TO THE 3.9 MONTHS GAINED BY CONTROLS. DURING

YEAR III PROJECT PUPILS GAINED AN AVERAGE OF 7.3 MONTHS IN ARITHMETIC ACHIEVEMENT WHILE THE CONTROLS GAINED ONLY 5.3 MONTHS.

THUS, THE RESULTS OF ACHIEVEMENT TESTING CLEARLY INDICATE THAT THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE IS EFFECTIVE IN ACCELERATING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT. SUBSTANTIAL GAINS IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT WERE FOUND AT BOTH THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVELS. HOWEVER, TO GET STRONG RESULTS, REINFORCEMENT FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT SHOULD BEGIN EARLY IN THE SCHOOL YEAR, AS SOON AS THE CLASSROOM CONTROL HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED. IN ADDITION, IT WAS SHOWN THAT INNER-CITY PUPILS COULD CONSISTENTLY GAIN ONE MONTH IN READING AND ONE MONTH IN ARITHMETIC FOR EACH MONTH THAT THEY WERE IN SCHOOL.

THE RESULTS FROM A STANDARDIZED I.Q. TEST INDICATED THAT THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE ALSO PROMOTES ACADEMIC APTITUDE. APPROPRIATE LEVELS OF THE CALIFORNIA SHORT FORM TEST OF MENTAL MATURITY (CTMM) WERE ADMINISTERED TO ALL PROJECT AND COMPARISON CLASSES AS A PRETEST IN SEPTEMBER 1971, AND AS A POST-TEST IN APRIL 1972. AT FIVE OF THE SIX GRADE LEVELS TESTED, PROJECT PUPILS GAINED MORE THAN THEIR COUNTERPARTS. THE AVERAGE GAIN FOR A PROJECT PUPIL WAS 6.75 POINTS, WHILE THE AVERAGE GAIN FOR A COMPARISON PUPIL WAS 1.70 POINTS. IN THE FOURTH GRADE CLASSES, WHERE 81 PER CENT OF THE STUDENTS HAD BEEN IN THE PROJECT FOR TWO YEARS, THE STUDENTS GAINED ALMOST 14 I.Q. POINTS IN EIGHT MONTHS.

PERFORMANCE ON PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS WAS MORE VARIABLE, HOWEVER, THERE WAS EVIDENCE, (BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THE FITT ATTITUDE TOWARD SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE) RESULTS BASED ON THE CRANDALL INTELLECTUAL ACHIEVEMENT RESPONSIBILITY QUESTIONNAIRE INDICATED THAT PROJECT PUPILS COME TO ACCEPT MORE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND FAILURE. NO SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES IN SELF-CONCEPT WERE FOUND.

COSTS

THE COSTS OF INITIATING THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE VARIES CONSIDERABLY DEPENDING UPON WHAT MATERIALS ARE ALREADY AVAILABLE IN THE SCHOOL AND ON WHETHER OR NOT THE TECHNIQUE IS APPLIED TO BOTH CONDUCT AND ACADEMIC BEHAVIOR, OR TO CONDUCT BEHAVIOR ALONE. ALL FIGURES ARE BASED ON A TYPICAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CONTAINING APPROXIMATELY 400 PUPILS. THE MAXIMUM COST OF IMPLEMENTING THE TECHNIQUE SCHOOL-WIDE IS $6.73 PER PUPIL, INCLUDING TRAINING THE STAFF, AND THE MINIMUM IS $1.61. THE MAXIMUM COST OF CONTINUATION IS $1.50 AND THE MINIMUM IS $.75. A COMPREHENSIVE BREAK-DOWN OF ALL COSTS IS AVAILABLE FROM THE PROJECT OFFICE.

PUBLICATIONS

THE PROJECT HAS WRITTEN A 20-PAGE BOOKLET, PROJECT SUCCESS ENVIRONMENT, WHICH DESCRIBES THE PROJECT IN NON-TECHNICAL LANGUAGE. THERE IS ALSO THE TOOMER LOG, A DAY-BY-DAY DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES INVOLVED IN INTRODUCING THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE ON A SCHOOL-WIDE BASIS. WRITTEN AS A JOURNAL, THIS VOLUME IS DESIGNED FOR THOSE WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES AND DAY-BY-DAY PROCEDURES INVOLVED IN IMPLEMENTING THE TECHNIQUE. FINALLY, THE PROJECT STAFF HAS WRITTEN PROJECT SUCCESS ENVIRONMENT: TRAINING PACKAGE FOR PRINCIPALS, WHICH IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE A PRINCIPAL WITH THE SKILLS NECESSARY TO INTRODUCE THE TECHNIQUE INTO HIS SCHOOL. THERE ARE SEVERAL ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM THE PROJECT OFFICE INCLUDING MORE THAN ONE WHICH REPORTS THE HAND DATA GATHERED.

EXPORTABILITY

IN MOST STUDIES OF CONTINGENCY MANAGEMENT (BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION), A SPECIALIST TRAINS A SINGLE TEACHER AND IS THEN CONTINUALLY AVAILABLE

TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND TO SUGGEST CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM WHEN FAILURES OCCUR. CLEARLY, TIME AND EXPENSE PROHIBIT THE TRAINING OF LARGE NUMBERS OF TEACHERS IN THIS FASHION. ON THE OTHER HAND, PROGRAMS DESIGNED FOR GROUP TRAINING IN BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION USUALLY TRAIN TEACHERS IN ISOLATION FROM THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THEY TEACH. ONCE TRAINED, THE TEACHERS ARE EXPECTED TO RETURN TO THEIR SCHOOLS, DEVELOP A PROGRAM SUITING THEIR PARTICULAR SETTING, IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM AND ASSESS ITS EFFECTIVENESS WITH LITTLE ASSISTANCE. THIS APPROACH LEADS TO MANY FAILURES AND TO BACKSLIDING EVEN WHEN EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS ARE DEVELOPED.

PROJECT SUCCESS ENVIRONMENT HAS FOUND VIABLE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF COST-EFFECTIVE TEACHER TRAINING AND EXPORTATION. THE PROJECT HAS DEVELOPED A FOUR-DAY TEACHER TRAINING WORKSHOP BASED ON PROJECT SUCCESS ENVIRONMENT: TRAINING PACKAGE FOR PRINCIPALS. THE TRAINING PROVIDES TEACHERS WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE THEORY BEHIND THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE, PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE USING THE TECHNIQUE IN A CLASSROOM WITH STUDENTS, AND A SERIES OF CHECK LISTS FOR DETERMINING HOW, WHAT TO, AND WHEN TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM. IN ORDER TO EXPORT THIS PROGRAM TO OTHER SCHOOLS AND TO GUARANTEE THAT THE PROGRAM SURVIVES BEYOND THE FIRST FEW MONTHS OF IMPLEMENTATION, THE PROJECT HAS DEVELOPED THE "PRINCIPAL TRAINING MODEL". ESSENTIALLY, A PRINCIPAL AND TWO OF HIS TEACHERS COME TO THE PROJECT TRAINING CENTER WHERE THEY ARE TRAINED TO APPLY THE TECHNIQUE, AND TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM AT THEIR SCHOOL. TO DATE, FIFTY-SEVEN PRINCIPALS HAVE BEEN TRAINED USING THIS PRINCIPAL TRAINING MODEL AND THE PROJECT STAFF IS IN THE PROCESS OF EVALUATING THEIR EFFORTS. WORKSHOPS ARE SCHEDULED REGULARLY THROUGH THE END OF THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR.

CONCLUSION

PROJECT SUCCESS ENVIRONMENT HAS BEEN A SUCCESSFUL RESEARCH ENDEAVOR AND DEVELOPMENTAL TITLE III EFFORT. THE STATISTICS HAVE BEEN QUITE SUCCESSFUL. PUPILS HAVE LEARNED MORE. AND THEY FEEL GOOD ABOUT THIS LEARNING! THEIR TEACHERS ENJOY TEACHING MORE! FOR ALL CONCERNED, SCHOOL HAS BECOME A MORE PLEASANT PLACE TO LEARN AND WORK. BUT ALL TO OFTEN TITLE III PROGRAMS, WHATEVER THEIR SUCCESSES, ALL SIMPLY PHASED OUT AT THE END OF THE FUNDING PERIOD. THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT PSE HAS AVOIDED THIS FATE.

THE 1974 BUDGET FOR THE ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS INCLUDES $90,000 TO ESTABLISH A MINIMUM OF 10 "ADDITIONAL" PROJECT SUCCESS SCHOOLS--INCLUDING AT LEAST ONE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL. IN ADDITION, PSE HAS BEEN AWARDED A CONTRACT OF $169,000 BY THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. THIS CONTRACT INVOLVES TRAINING PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS FROM ALL AREAS OF THE STATE TO IMPLEMENT THE SUCCESS TECHNIQUE IN LOCAL SCHOOL SITUATIONS. AND WE HAVE SEVERAL SUCCESS SCHOOLS NOW FULLY OPERATIONAL.

THE LEA HAS REACTED IN COLD HARD CASH. THE STATE OF GEORGIA HAS EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE IN THE RESULTS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE SUCCESS EFFORT BY AWARDING THE PROJECT A FOURTH YEAR CONTRACT. (THIS ACTION IS QUITE UNIQUE WITHIN THE REALMS OF TITLE III FUNDING.) IT IS ENCOURAGING TO REALIZE THAT SEVERAL HIGHLY RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS AGREE, INCLUDING RECOGNITION OF THE PROJECT AS ONE OF THE TOP THREE EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS IN THE NATION DURING 1973.